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FM AMEMBASSY KIGALI
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 5238
INFO RUEHJB/AMEMBASSY BUJUMBURA 0288
RUEHDR/AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM 1102
RUEHKM/AMEMBASSY KAMPALA 1871
RUEHKI/AMEMBASSY KINSHASA 0423
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON 0210
RUEHNR/AMEMBASSY NAIROBI 1190
RUEHFR/AMEMBASSY PARIS 0464
RUEHTC/AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE 0172

C O N F I D E N T I A L KIGALI 000269

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 05/11/2017

TAGS: PREL PGOV PHUM RW

SUBJECT: GRENADE ATTACK ON GENOCIDE MEMORIAL IN KIGALI

REF: 07 KIGALI 0306

Classified By: Ambassador Michael R. Arietti, reason 1.4 (B/D)

¶1. (C) At approximately 7:00 p.m. local time on April 10, an unidentified individual tossed a grenade at the entrance gate to the Gisozi Genocide Memorial Center in Kigali. One policeman at the gate was killed, and another policeman wounded. By some accounts, a group of mourners were leaving the memorial when the attack occurred, but were not injured. The individual fled on foot, and has not been apprehended. Damage to the facility was slight, with a pock-marked brick roadway and guardhouse. Police sources tell us that about 90 local residents have been called in for questioning, all lacking identification. Most will be released, say the police, but some may be connected to the attack.

¶2. (SBU) This attack comes in the middle of genocide memorial week, marked by solemn opening and closing ceremonies, church services, film series, and other activities meant to mark the fourteenth anniversary of the 1994 genocide. However, not everyone welcomes the festivities. In recent days, the head of Ibuka, the principal survivors' group, issued a public statement lamenting a recent rise in attacks and killings of genocide survivors. A local resident was put under arrest for mocking a survivor, reportedly saying, "I have no need to attend the ceremonies, my family is still alive." The mayor of Rwamagana District urged inhabitants to be "calm" during the mourning week, asking people not to "throw stones at the roofs of survivors" (Note: this is a common tactic in the countryside by opponents of reconciliation, with such incidents tracked by police and Ibuka).

¶3. (SBU) Comment. Genocide memorial week and the days leading up to it are generally marked by heightened tension, as those who mourn the loss of family and friends are sometime confronted by those who do not. The attack on the Gisozi Genocide Memorial mirrors a grenade assault on a genocide memorial in Cyangugu in late March of last year (reftel). An attack on the nation's principal genocide memorial site, where over 258,000 victims are interred, is an especially egregious affront to the memory of those lost in the genocide. End comment.

ARIETTI